

Message Text

SECRET

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05 /050 W

----- 023434

R 030629Z FEB 76

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2769

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0133

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IZ

SUBJ: SADDAM HUSSEIN, THE ARMY, AND INTERNAL SECURITY

REF: BAGHDAD 0115

1. SITUATION REMAINS CALM IN BAGHDAD AND FOREIGN COMMUNITY HAS REACHED NO FIRM CONCLUSIONS ON WHETHER OR NOT A COUP ATTEMPT TOOK PLACE AT CAMP RASHID ON JAN. 26 OR 27. THERE WAS NOTABLE INCREASE IN SECURITY MEASURES ON JAN. 9, WITH SOME STREETS BLOCKED AND POLICE AND SECURITY VEHICLES AT ALL INTERSECTIONS. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT BAKR AND HUSSEIN WENT TO CAMP RASHID ON BOTH THE 26TH AND 27TH AND HEAVY SECURITY MEASURES ARE NORMAL WHENEVER THESE GENTLEMEN TRAVEL THROUGH BAGHDAD.

2. ACCORDING TO ONE SET OF RUMORS, PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT TO CAMP RASHID WAS TO INVESTIGATE A COUP ATTEMPT AND METE OUT SUMMARY JUSTICE. ACCORDING TO OTHERS, PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD SEMINARS WITH SENIOR OFFICERS AND REVIEW PREVIOUS MILITARY OPERATIONS PK BRTH IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THOSE OPERATIONS.

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3. ON FEB. 1, SADZAM KJNSBQC ATTENDED A CEREMONY MARKING THE OPENING OF THE 43RD COURSE OF THE ARMED FORCES STAFF COLLEGE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE APPEARED PUBLICLY IN UNIFORM AND IRAQI TELEVISION VIEWERS THAT EVENING WERE TREATED WITH THE SIGHT OF THEIR HANDSOME VICE CHAIRMAN IN THE IMMACULATELY TAILORED REGALIA OF A FULL GENERAL. LEST ANYONE MISS THE MESSAGE, THE TAFF COLLEGE AT THE SAME CEREMONY CONVENIENTLY AWARDED SADZAM A MASTER' DEGREE IN MILITARY SCIENCE (WITH HONORS) THEREBY REMOVING ALL DOUBTS AS TO THE LEGITIMACY OF SADDAM'S MELEORIC RISE TO THE TOP CAREER RANK OF THE ARAQI ARMED FORCES.

4. DURING HIS ACCEPTANCE UTEECH, SGOBAM ISSUED A NOT-VERY-VEILED WARNING TO HIS FELLOW OFFICERS WHEN HE SAID THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY AND OF THE REVOLUTION DID NOT MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ONE OFFICER AND ANOTHER ON THE BASIS OF POLITICAL LOYALTY TO THE PARTY, BUT IT SURELY DID SO ON THE BASIS OF LOYALTY TO E ZESBR WI R AND OF LOYALTY TO THE PEOPLE.

5. COMMENT: SADDAM'S EFFORTS TO CARVE OUT A DOMINANT ROLE FOR HIMSELF IN IRAQ'S MILITARY OCRARCHY HAVE NO DOUBT GENERATED RESENTMENT AMONG SENIOR CAREER OFFICERS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS RESENTMENT SURFACED IN SOME FORM AT CAMP RASHID ON JAN 26 AND 28.

IF SO, IT WAS APPARENTLY QUICKLY SUPPRESSED. IT IS PROBABLE THAT SADDAM'S WELL TAILORED GENERAL'S UNIFORM WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT STAGE PROP IN IRAQ'S TORTUOUS POLITICAL PROCESS AS SADDAM STRIVES TO COMPENSATE FOR HIS LACK OF A MILITARY BACKGROUND WHILE LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR HIS SUCCESSION TO BALR.

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